



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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## BISHOP TUTU'S PASSPORT IS LIFTED

NEW YORK -- The archbishop's mail is allegedly tampered with. A bishop's passport is lifted and a banned priest faces a harsh jail term as the racist South African republic lashes out against growing Christian opposition to its apartheid policies.

In the latest incident, the Rt. Rev. Desmond Tutu, general secretary of the South Africa Council of Churches and former Anglican Bishop of Lesotho, was forced to surrender his passport on orders of the Interior Department. The action took place shortly after he had expressed outrage at a 69-month prison sentence imposed on the Rev. David Russell for violating the terms of his banning order.

Bishop Tutu's organization has also recently sponsored a conference on racism at which black delegates issued a demand that the Churches take a greater lead in the fight against apartheid or risk seeing the formation of a "black confessing, militant Church."

Describing himself as "but one of the casualties" of the struggle against apartheid, the black prelate said, "This is intended to stop us from speaking the truth, but I owe my allegiance to Jesus Christ. I will speak as I believe he commands. I will speak for justice and reconciliation."

"Overseas people will still be able to hear us, as they are able to read and write and will also be paying us visits," he said. "They will know what is happening. This is an incredible erosion on individual freedom, particularly when it is being done to people who are pleading for a peaceful solution to our problem."

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Father Russell, whose sentence Bishop Tutu called "vicious. . .even within South Africa," was sentenced for attending the December meeting of Provincial Synod to which he had been elected. A banned person is not permitted to leave his district, speak, write or be part of any assembly. Fifty-seven months of the sentence were suspended and he is currently at liberty -- although remaining under the ban -- while the rest is appealed.

Upon learning of the sentence, the Most Rev. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, stated, "A good and honest man has been put in prison for a Christian stand. Whenever that happens to anyone in the world, I will want him to know that he has my support and my prayers."

It was shortly after the synod meeting that a London newspaper reported that Archbishop Bill Burnett, Primate of the Church of South Africa, was on a list of people whose telephones were tapped and whose mail was tampered with. During his six-year primacy -- and before in various sees -- Archbishop Burnett has spoken strongly against apartheid and helped Anglicans maintain a strong stand against the policies.

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